

The panel discussion disappoints one looking for the future prospects of plant systematics. It comes as no surprise that nearly all the speakers agreed that the top three priorities should be 1) documentation of the world's biodiversity before it is irreversibly lost, 2) conservation of that biodiversity, and 3) continued research to better understand evolutionary mechanisms. Some of the speakers mentioned increasing and improving herbarium and biological databases and retrieval. However, no room was given to developing models on how the greatly expanded databasing should be achieved. Indeed the only other reference to this important issue was a couple of paragraphs in Kubitzki's paper.

Surprisingly, I found very little on the next phase for molecular biology. That is, moving from a simplistic comparisons of nucleotide sequences in a few analyzable genes to understanding the underlying genetics of integrated character complexes of expressed phenotypes. Indeed, in Kubitzki's assessment I found just the opposite, "To this end [of interpreting character evolution] morphological or other traits can be mapped onto cladograms, which should preferably be based on molecular data." While I understand his concern of avoiding circular reasoning by using alternate data sets, I see a problematic attitude that is developing in systematics, even among the traditional morphologically oriented researchers. Are we (as a biosystematics community) to form our classifications on one or a few genes and force the interpretation of morphological characters, many of which derive from highly correlated multi-gene complexes, onto those simple gene trees? Are we falling headlong again into the trap of "one character taxonomy?" Perhaps we should be more prudent, realizing that these highly sophisticated, but philosophically simplistic methods are not showing us phylogenetic history any more than do the confusingly homoplastic morphological methods.

While this book falls short of its purported goal, nonetheless it is a valuable collection of articles. It is worth owning, especially for accessing the literature on palynology, Egyptian botany, nomenclature, and various modern systematic techniques.—*Roger W. Sanders, Associate Collections Manager, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, 509 Pecan St, Fort Worth, TX 76102-4060, U.S.A., rsanders@brit.org.*

MARK BONTA. 2003. **Seven Names for the Bellbird: Conservation Geography in Honduras.** (ISBN I-58544-249-6, hbk.). Texas A&M University Press, John H. Lindsey Bldg., Lewis St., 4354 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-4354, U.S.A. (Orders: 1800-826-8911, w-lawrence@tamu.edu, www.tamu.edu/upress). \$35.00, 250 pp., 35 b&w photos, 4 maps, 5 3/4" × 9 1/4".

Within the text, Mark Bonta takes an ethnographic approach to understanding the relationship between the local people of Honduras and the birds of their region, thus serving to create a bridge between academic geography and what he calls "on-the-ground conservation." The recounting of this approach and its results takes the form of individual and family histories and stories relayed throughout the text. The particular intent of the text is to dissuade the reader that humans are entirely destructive with a conscious purpose, and that in particular the relationship between Honduran locals and their avifauna is not inherently detrimental to the birds. However, Bonta does not parade his findings as assurance that the birds have a secure place in the Neotropical landscape.

The text is divided into nine separate chapters, preceded by an introduction to conservation geography, as it will be dealt with for the remainder of the text, and succeeded by an appendix listing the birds recorded for the central Olancho department of Honduras as well as a glossary of Spanish terms. The first chapter delves into the subject of "ornithophilia" (a natural love for birds) through the depiction of a young girl, Lucita, and her interaction with the birds in her area. As a standard for

chapters dealing with personal histories, Bonta further divides each into sections, the first few serving as stand-alone examples of what in the latter sections he takes apart and reflects on in his own voice.

Chapter two establishes the geographical and historical background of the region and its bird population, acknowledging these features as among the most important contributors to the varying relationships with birds. Chapter three takes into account that Honduras is a male-dominated society and the more obvious facets of relationships with birds are not the only ones; women and children are given voices to share their perceptions of the issue. Chapter four lays bare the situation within Juticalpa, an urban center in Olancho, using case studies of two birds, the *zopilote* (Black Vulture) and the *zorzal* (Clay-colored Robin). Chapter five brings up the capacity in which large landowners act as conservationists, contrary to general expectation. Chapter six presents the other side of chapter four, highlighting the rural landscape of small domestic and individual villages and farmers, where biodiversity is highest and may be most easily conserved. Chapter seven exposes Honduras as a country where the majority of soil cover is not rainforest, and where many species requiring the attention of conservationists do not make their homes in virgin rainforest. Other marginalized species are also dealt with, such as those that are nocturnal. Chapter eight is a case study centered about the montane rainforest of Montaña de Babilonia. In chapter nine Bonta presents several proposals regarding the conservation geography of Honduran avifauna, with the intent for broader applications.

Perhaps the message which Bonta intends be taken home is that the destruction in the Neotropics is not accomplished with clear and purposeful intent, but rather as a side effect of certain socio-economic factors. Therefore, to lessen its impact, we must take a "geographical approach to conservation that cuts across artificial boundaries separating what is 'natural' from what is 'cultural' in the landscape" (p.3). While the theme of conservation geography is implied throughout the book, it is only in the last chapter where it is dealt with directly, and where it ceases to merely be an "ethnography of birds." The book does not resort to scientific and technical terms and therefore is easily understood; it is for a general audience interested in avifauna, conservation, and the idea of a "cultural landscape."—*Tiana Franklin, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, 509 Pecan St, Fort Worth, TX 76102-4060, U.S.A., tfranklin@brit.org.*

PAUL E. MINNIS (Ed.). 2003. **People and Plants in Ancient Eastern North America.** (ISBN 1-58834-133-X, pbk.). Smithsonian Institution Press, 750 Ninth Street NW, Suite 4300, Washington, DC 20560-0950, U.S.A. (Orders: 202-275-2300, <http://www.sipress.si.edu/>). \$34.95, 423 pp., 25 figs., 45 tables, 6" × 9".

This text is presented as the first in a two-volume set, consisting of eight chapters by contributing North American anthropologists. Minnis chooses to extend the time frame of ethnobotany to the past, and therefore deal with methods of paleoethnobotany. Using these methods, the contributing authors delve into three subject areas: prehistoric use of plants, crop history and applications, and human impacts on local environments. This first volume is loosely contained by geographical boundaries into, as the title indicates, an overview of Eastern North America; its fellow, as yet unpublished, will cover the remaining Western North American region.

In a sixteen-page introduction, Minnis provides an historical overview of the field of paleoethnobotany, quite easily explained for those of us that may have little use for such long-strung terms. Following this are chapters that concentrate on the Central and Southern Woodlands (about which much work has been done in the past), native plant use, crop domestication and food production, anthropogenic ecology, and regional concentrations in the Northeast, the Great Plains, and in the Caribbean Islands.